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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 25 February 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, I am compelled to draw your attention to the ongoing attempts by Israel, the occupying Power, to unlawfully alter the status, demographic composition and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly East Jerusalem.

Through its illegal settlement activities — including the confiscation of land, construction and expansion of settlements, settlement "outposts" and settlement infrastructure, transfer of Israeli settlers and construction of the wall, as well as by means of home demolitions, excavations, residency restrictions and other unlawful measures — Israel continues to create a myriad of illegitimate facts on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, severing the Territory into separate and non-contiguous parts; isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the Territory; displacing thousands of Palestinians from their homes; and destroying some communities in their entirety.

In this regard, in follow-up to my previous letters to you regarding Israel's illegal colonization activities, I regret to inform you of the demolition and eviction orders recently issued by Israel, the occupying Power, in Palestinian neighbourhoods of Occupied East Jerusalem. In the past week, the occupying Power ordered the eviction of dozens of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in the centre of East Jerusalem by ordering the evacuation of 27 homes there. This was followed by a decision during the current week to order the eviction of 1,500 Palestinians from their homes in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

Contrary to the false, empty pretext given by Israel, the orders clearly aim at the illegal confiscation of Palestinian property and land and the forced displacement of more Palestinian civilians from East Jerusalem. These unlawful and provocative orders by the occupying Power have stoked already heightened tensions, threatening

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to further destabilize the fragile situation on the ground and, moreover, have been thoroughly rejected by the Palestinian people and their leadership.

As we have repeatedly warned, the direct and deliberate intent of all of these illegal colonization measures is to entrench Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to facilitate its attempts to illegally acquire and de facto annex even more Palestinian land. Such destructive, racist and colonial policies and measures constitute grave violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and the Security Council has, in numerous resolutions, clearly declared the illegality and invalidity of such measures by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

These unlawful measures are seriously undermining the contiguity, integrity, viability and unity of the Palestinian Territory. Moreover, as has been widely recognized, this relentless land grab is gravely jeopardizing — if not completely destroying — the prospect for physically realizing the two-State solution for peace, on which there exists an international consensus.

The international community, including the Security Council, must act to address these dangerous developments. Israel, the occupying Power, cannot be permitted to continue to so flagrantly and grossly breach international law without consequence. The international community must demand Israel's compliance with all of its obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, by which it is bound as the occupying Power, and demand the cessation of all of its illegal policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Hope and belief in the potential for making peace a reality are rapidly diminishing in the face of such incessant Israeli breaches of international law and violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people under its occupation since 1967. Peace and security in the Middle East can never be achieved by colonization, displacement, disenfranchisement, collective punishment and oppression; it can only be achieved by respect for international law, human rights and United Nations resolutions. Urgent action is thus required by the international community, including all relevant United Nations bodies, to stop this illegal behaviour by Israel, which runs totally contrary to and is destroying the purpose, spirit and goals of the peace process, to the irreversibility of which the Security Council declared its commitment in resolution 1850 (2008).

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 334 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 18 February 2009 (A/ES-10/448-S/2009/98), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. (As all the victims have not yet been identified, their names will be included in an annex to a future letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer